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**Beyond the Sugar Skull: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mexican Art
Lessons on Pinterest**

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**Beyond the Sugar Skull: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mexican Art
Lessons On Pinterest**

by

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Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2016

Dedication

To my hardworking parents for teaching me that it's all worth it. Dad, you are my favorite person in the world and your words of wisdom always stay with me. Mom, thank you for being my number one motivator and for teaching me that anything is possible when you are born to run!

To my aunt and uncle, Rose Marie and J.R., for being my second set of parents in Austin. Your constant love and support do not go unnoticed.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank the Art Education Department at UT Austin for this opportunity to explore such a wonderful field. Dr. Bain, thank you for being patient with me and for being so enthusiastic about my research. Without your energy, I would have been absolutely lost. Dr. Adejumo, you have opened up a world of possibilities in community outreach and art making that I am excited to explore in the future. Dr. Meyer, your incredible insight in connecting schools and communities with museums has motivated me to provide art-making opportunities to as many individuals as I can. Dr. Bolin, your marvelous knowledge has opened my eyes to new ideas and perspectives in the field that I will always carry with me.

To the Visual Arts Center, thank you for my Teaching Assistant position this year. Xochi, you have taught me so much about organization and leadership. I thank you for this mentorship. Emily, your expertise in educational outreach has been insightful. And to Jade, thank you for the advice you have given me.

Many thanks to Dr. Waldman for telling me, "Stepha, you need to be an art educator."

Last, but certainly not least, Ms. Sunny. I appreciate your willingness and excitement about this study.

Abstract

Beyond the Sugar Skull: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mexican Art Lessons on Pinterest

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2016

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This study is motivated by two research questions: (1) What criteria does an elementary school art teacher apply when searching “Mexican art lessons” on Pinterest? (2) What kinds of pins and pinboards are available to online users who search “Mexican art lessons” on Pinterest? To examine these questions, an instrumental case study (Yin, 2009) was designed in order to collect data in the form of pins and a semi-structured interview with the selected participant. The findings reveal that the art educator applies her previous familiarity of Latin American art to find culturally authentic pins and pinboards on Mexican art. Additionally, these pins and pinboards that are available feature images of artworks derived from the Oaxaca-Mexican folk art culture, influencing the art teacher’s decision to select certain pins over others for her lesson.

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Chapter One: Introduction

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Education researchers have recognized the abundance of multicultural art lesson plans published online and point to the importance of being able to critically examine this subject matter (Chin, 2011; Gorski, 2009; McShay, 2005). For instance, Acuff (2014) finds that many of these online resources maintain an “us versus other” dichotomy and that the content contradicts the current and progressive scholarship on critical multiculturalism. To avoid disseminating this type of stereotypical cultural knowledge online, Acuff (2014) asserts that art educators must “continuously [engage] in critical examinations of all the ways in which information is delivered to and used by our future and practicing art teachers” (p. 313). Intrigued by these findings, I explored this phenomenon in more detail by conducting a specific Internet search on Google for “Mexican art lessons.” I was directed to numerous links that were displayed from the most to the least heavily trafficked. While there were many websites to choose from, my eye was immediately drawn to Pinterest as it appeared on the top of the search page (see Figure 1).

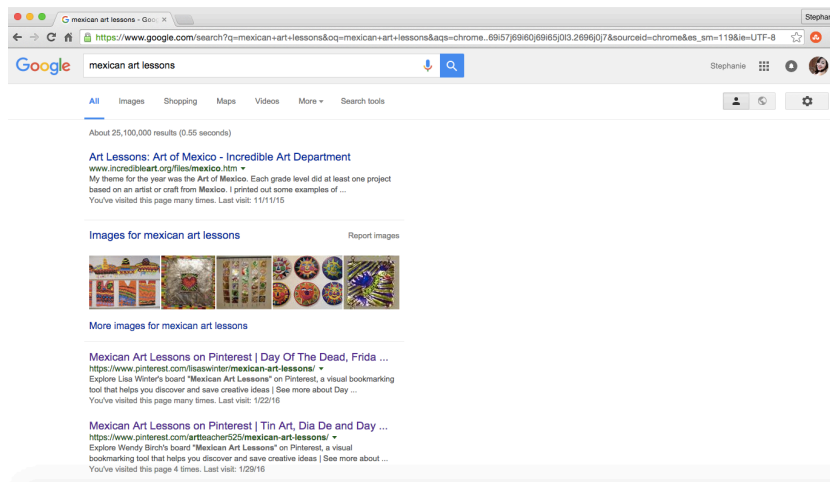


Figure 1: Results of Google search using key words “Mexican art lessons.”

Pinterest is a social media website best known for its countless images and hyperlinks related, but not limited to, a broad range of interests such as food recipes, fitness tips, and wedding inspirations. Arranged in a salon-style format, registered users can create “pinboards” and “pins” to make scrolling easy on a computer or handheld device. A pinboard is the digital equivalent of a bulletin board in which users can store their favorite images, or pins, into one database. Both pins and pinboards can be viewed by online visitors or shared amongst registered website users. Figure 2 is an example of a Pinterest user’s collection of pinboards, identified as “Keep”, “Release”, and “Art.” Figure 3 shows four individual pins that the user has pinned into the “Art” pinboard.

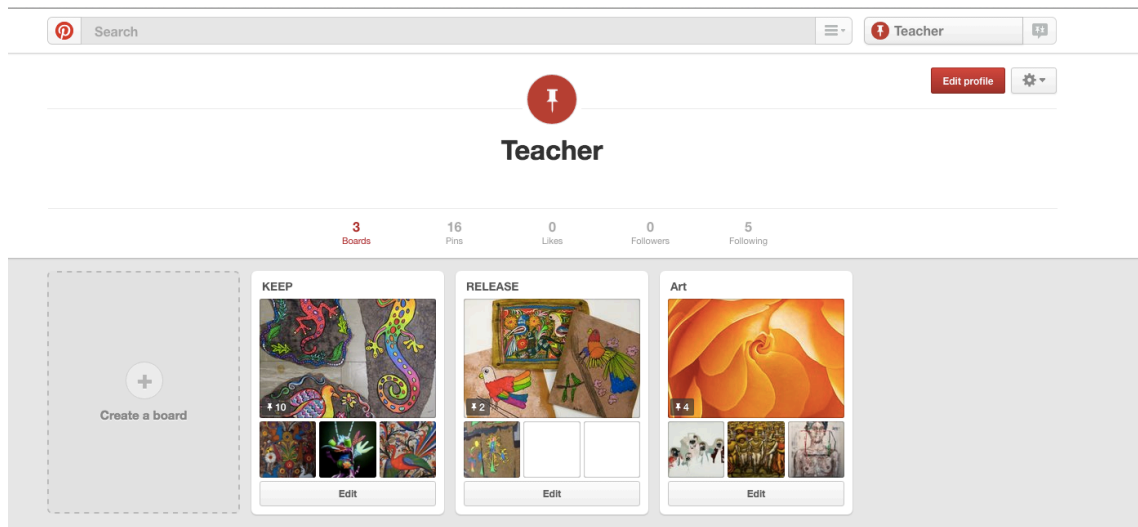


Figure 2: Screenshot of a registered user's collection of pinboards.

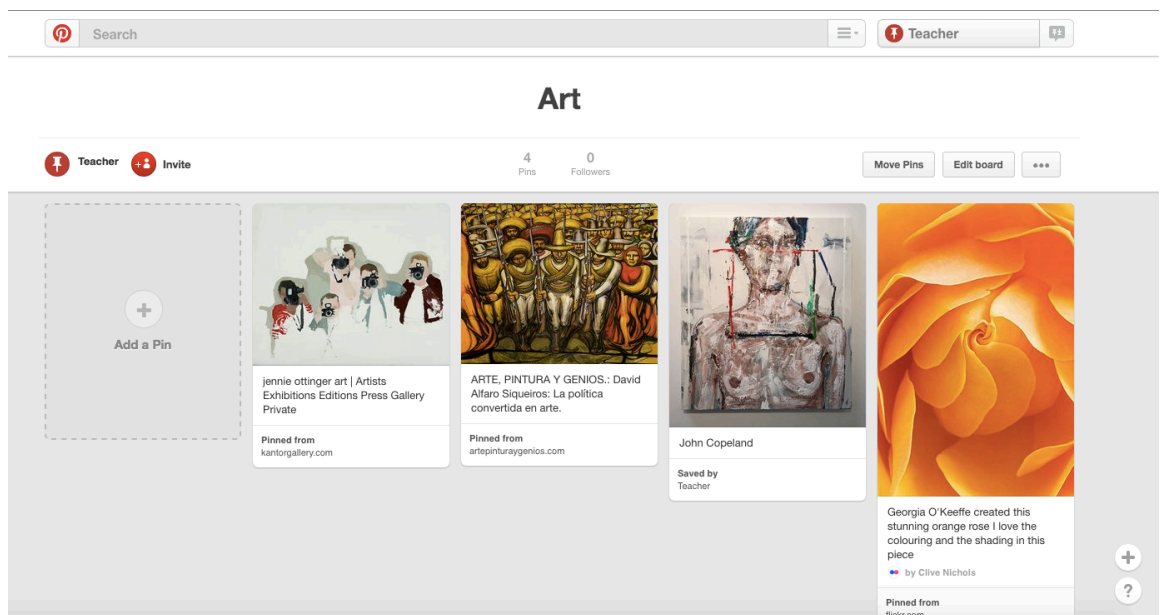


Figure 3: Screenshot of a registered user's collection of pins stored under the "Art" pinboard.

While Pinterest is used to share recipes and hobbies, it has also become a curricular resource in the art education field. Since its release in 2011, Pinterest has

grown exponentially with a reported 100 million users world wide in September 2015 (Hwang, 2015). Chelsie Meyer, contributing writer for “The Art of Education” blog, explains that Pinterest “is an art teachers [sic] dream because you can ‘bookmark’ a website by using an image from the site as a visual” (“#1 Art Teacher to Follow on Pinterest,” 2012). With this in mind, I entered “Mexican art lessons” into the Pinterest search engine and found an expansive collection of pins. In reviewing the pins, I concluded that Meyers’ statement remains true four years after her blog post.

Educators would be remiss in not acknowledging the popularity and heightened success of Pinterest, a company valued at \$11 billion (Hwang, 2015). My initial search in Pinterest yielded a plethora of information that indicated its potential use by teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this case study was to examine how an art teacher uses Pinterest to prepare a lesson for students by using the keywords, “Mexican art lessons.”

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What criteria does an elementary school art teacher apply when searching “Mexican art lessons” on Pinterest?
2. What kinds of pins and pinboards are available to online users who search “Mexican art lessons” on Pinterest?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The number of Hispanics residing in the United States is, quite naturally, reflected in the student population. Depending on the school location, however, the number of Hispanic students may exceed the U.S. Census Bureau’s percentage of 17%. As an

example, the Dallas Independent School District – the second largest school district in Texas – reports that 59.7% of their students are Hispanic (“My Data Enrollment Statistics as of 03/20/2016,” 2016). Barring immigration reform, a reduction in Hispanic students in grades K through 12 in the foreseeable future is not probable. In response to the changing demographics, researchers like Kristantas and Talleyrand (2005) suggest teaching methods to facilitate learning in diverse classrooms. They claim that some culturally responsive teaching strategies include, “taking into consideration the students’ experiences, cultural characteristics, and perspectives as a medium for providing effec[tive] teaching...specifically through online resources” (p. 627). Though, what do these online resources look like?

For art teachers who choose to use the Internet to prepare lessons for students, websites like Pinterest are designed to immediately populate on search engines. The problem, however, is that much about the community of Pinterest users who produce such content is unknown. In particular, by creating a screen name and having the option to disclose personal information – which may or may not be truthful - onto their profile pages, users are able to hide their identity behind a computer screen, making it easy to post any information they desire onto the database. The qualifications, expertise and motivation of users are unknown and untested on a platform that focuses primarily on images. Thus, the use of Pinterest as a curricular resource by educators who teach in a changing and diverse classroom warrants examination.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

As an emerging art educator, I realize that it is important to recognize the diversity of students in the public school system. Encountering difference by encouraging students to view the world in the eyes of others help to shape students' perspectives, leading them to form multiple views of the world around them – a key component to developing critical thinking skills in schools (Gude, 2007). In this day and age, it is important to acknowledge that minorities, particularly Latinos, make up a large portion of the United States population. According to the previously cited 2014 U.S. Census Bureau report, two-thirds of the estimated 55 million Hispanics residing in the United States are of Mexican descent. Now more than ever, it is the most appropriate time to expand the school curriculum and include a wide range of cultures, especially Mexican, to promote a sense of inclusion in the classroom. Therefore, my motivation for undertaking this research is influenced by the changing demographics of the Latino population in the public school system.

My personal motivation for undertaking this research is deeply rooted in my admiration for Mexican culture. As a Mexican-American, I celebrate my cultural identity in the paintings I create, the stories I write and the projects I teach. Though despite these tributes to my culture, I was not raised in a traditional Mexican household. One instance of this can be seen in the very little Spanish that I speak. Therefore, I have felt like somewhat of an outsider to my own culture. Despite this, my unique creations have always been a way for me to explore my Mexican identity. With that being said, I see my research as being no different from my art. As I investigate an art educator navigating

Pinterest and critically examine the Mexican art lessons that are to be found on the website, I believe I will learn more about the different facets that make up such a unique culture. Additionally, I believe that my unique upbringing as a Mexican-American demonstrates that I am not a cultural expert myself and therefore, will make my research more approachable for those who are also unfamiliar with teaching lessons that involve cultures different from their own.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The most important and commonly used terms in this thesis are defined below. These terms are particularly important for individuals who have never used Pinterest and who have no knowledge of educational research.

Culture

Banks, Banks & McGee (1989) argue that culture is defined as the “values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another in modernized societies...people within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors in the same or in similar ways” (p. 8).

Curriculum

An organized plan of lessons in which the activities and overall objectives are explicitly stated, curated for students and framed by some sort of institution such as a school, museum, or community.

Critical multicultural art education

A form of multicultural art education in which the educator/practitioner is engaging in a process of critical inquiry. In this way, critical multicultural art education “acknowledges the partiality of representation and highlight how knowledge is shaped historically and culturally” (Desai, 2000, p. 15).

Critical pedagogy

“Questions how we name and construct ourselves as well as the other. Naming brings to visibility and existence that which was formerly hidden or kept silent. For instance, naming as racist, sexist, or patriarchal certain relationships in the classroom helps to provide students a context in which those issues can also be discussed in the outside community and larger society” (Sleeter, 1995, p. 18).

Guided search

Based on the keywords entered into the Pinterest search bar, this function automatically generates other categories that are relevant to the search.

As an example, searching “Mexican art lessons” produced a related search category for “Frida Kahlo.” This occurred because of the abundance of pin descriptions with the words, “Mexican”, “art”, and “lessons” in combination with “Frida Kahlo” (See Figure 3).

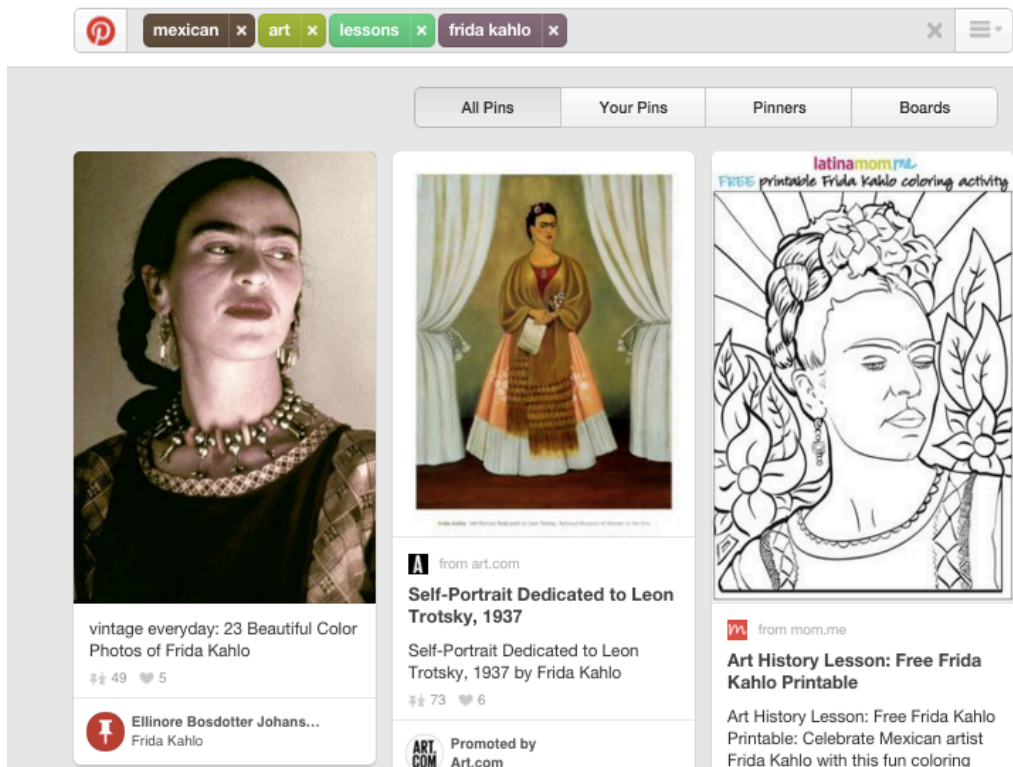


Figure 4: Example of the “guided search” feature on Pinterest.

Multicultural art education

Is “concerned with promoting cultural pride and equal learning opportunities in art for all children in U.S. schools through a diversified art curriculum (Adejumo, 2002).

Pins

“Pins are visual bookmarks. Each pin you see on Pinterest links back to the site it came from, so you can learn more, like how to make it or where to buy it” (“A Guide to Pinterest,” 2016).

Pinboards

“Boards are where you save and organize your Pins. You can make boards for anything and everything — save your recipes to one board and your dream vacation destinations to another” (“All About Boards,” 2016).

Pinterest (<https://www.pinterest.com/>)

Founded in 2010, Pinterest is a media-driven website where registered users are invited to share their ideas, photos, videos and other forms of online media on a pinboard for all to see. “Our mission is to help people discover the things they love and inspire them to go do those things in their daily lives” (“About Pinterest,” 2016).

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

All case studies, this one included, have their limitations. For one, Pinterest features over 750 million pinboards with 30 billion pins and counting (“Guided Search: A New Way To Find What You Are Looking For,” 2014). The results produced by the Pinterest search engine, therefore, reflect an exact moment in time when the website is accessed. This makes duplications of pins and pinboards in a rapidly changing environment highly unlikely. The use of multiple participants, however, was not necessary to answering the central research questions of this case study. I used one participant who met specific criteria to collect data using methods that could be controlled, monitored and documented. Though it is important to note that this study is not a comparative analysis of samples; rather, it is the examination of content available for a teacher preparing a lesson plan on Mexican art and culture. Therefore, the results of

this study are not generalizable because I researched one educator instead of multiple ones.

BENEFITS TO THE FIELD OF ART EDUCATION

Based on the demographic information of the U.S. population, the demand for culturally competent teachers must be met to satisfy the influx of students into public schools. Teachers, regardless of their educational background and training, must present curricular materials that accurately reflect the cultures of their student population in order to promote educational equality. As multicultural art educators advocate for (Adejumo, 2002; Gude, 2007; Stuhr, P. L., Petrovich-Mwaniki, L., & Wasson, R., 1992), a diversified art curriculum can enhance students' abilities to respect one another and to promote cultural competency in a changing world. By focusing on these goals for students, art teachers have the ability to transform their classrooms into learning environments where respectful cooperation and art making can take place. This task can be daunting for those art educators who are interested in teaching a multicultural art curriculum but are unfamiliar with how to approach this topic. My study will benefit those teachers and the art education field by shedding light on how one art teacher selects multicultural lessons on a popular website. What criteria does she use? What is her thinking and selection process? To what degree does she critically evaluate the pins? What cultural stereotypes may be portrayed in the website's content?

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One establishes the framework and limitations of this case study. Its need and contribution to existing academic scholarship are presented for use in ongoing research and applicability in the classroom. Furthermore, the presentation of demographic information is used to explain the specificity of this study on “Mexican art lessons.”

In Chapter Two, I provide a review of pertinent literature by addressing the following topics: 21st century learning, multicultural education, the multicultural art education curriculum, information literacy, visual culture and Pinterest. Through a thorough examination of works provided by leading researchers of these fields, the groundwork for this study will be established.

In Chapter Three, the methodology of this study including data collection tools and analysis will be discussed in detail.

In Chapter Four, I will present the results of this study through a tabulated analysis of text and coded methods of images.

In Chapter Five, conclusions will be formed based on the analyzed data and will draw the research together to provide suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Review of Pertinent Literature

The emergence of Pinterest has come at a time when new pedagogical strategies are being developed and the influence of technology is becoming increasingly popular in the classroom. As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, Pinterest has garnered attention within the education field since its release. While there are a variety of reasons for why educators collect pins and create pinboards, little research exists that examines the website and how it is being used for educational purposes, particularly within the art education field. Therefore, the following reviews focusing on 21st Century Learning, Multicultural Education, Multicultural Art Curriculum, Information Literacy, Visual Culture, and the history of Pinterest provide a grounding for this research study.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING

21st century learning is a contemporary pedagogical strategy that acknowledges the influence of technology in schools. 21st century learning also addresses the changing learning environment of students and how this evolution affects the ways in which they are able to learn both inside and outside the classroom. By addressing 21st century learning, my study will be situated within a more relevant and contemporary educational context.

The Partnership for 21st Century Learning has developed a framework that establishes the outcomes and support systems that students need to succeed in the classroom and in their everyday lives. Referring to Figure 4, the rainbow represents outcomes that students should master in order to succeed in their daily lives in the 21st century. These are a) life and career skills, b) learning and innovation skills – 4Cs, c)

information, media, and technology skills, and d) key subjects – 3Rs. The support systems that provide a framework for these goals are located below the rainbow and represent the systems that are necessary for students to achieve such success. These are a) standards and assessments, b) curriculum and instruction, c) professional development, and d) learning environments. In order for students to go “above and beyond” these outcomes, it is imperative for teachers to encourage students to embrace the 4’c - communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration (“Partnership for 21st Century Learning,” 2016).

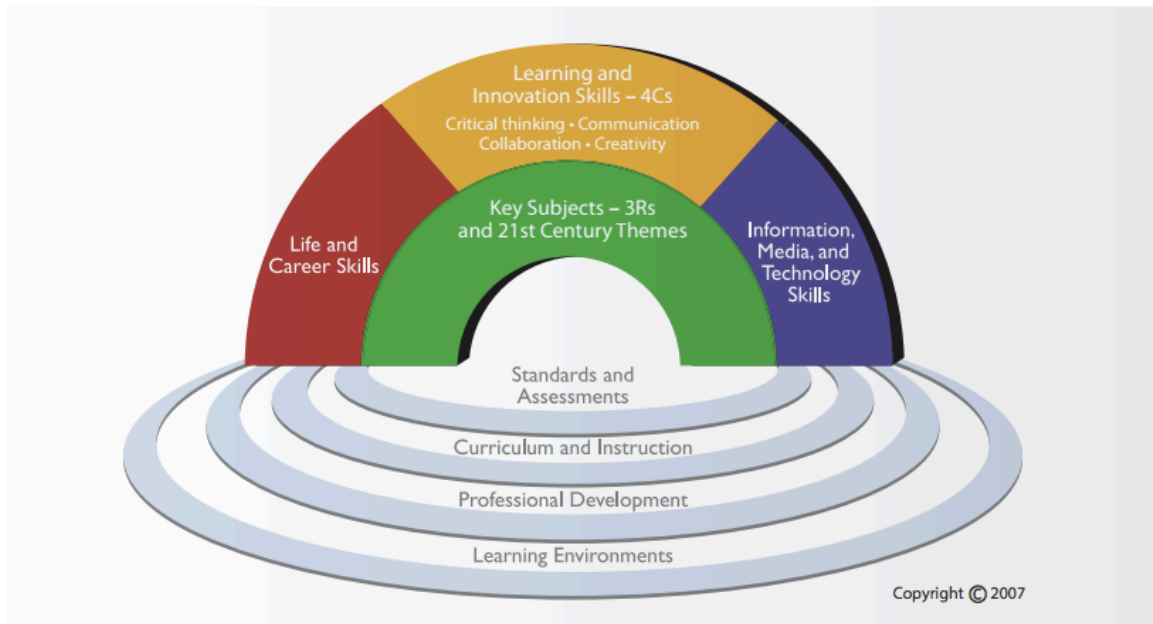


Figure 5: Framework for 21st Century Learning (www.p21.org).

The 4 C's in the Art Room

This section examines the 4Cs that are part of the student outcomes for 21st century learning. The 4Cs are a) communication, b) critical thinking, c) creativity, and d)

collaboration. By describing their strategies for application in visual arts, their outcomes can be better understood within the context of this study.

The importance of technology in today's society is influenced by the power of modern media and the ubiquity of communication technologies in all aspects of life (Preparing 21st Century Students For A Global Society, 2010). Some education experts argue that arts should be integrated into the school curriculum because there are many experiences and a multitude of occasions in which we need art forms to say what literal language cannot say (Eisner, 2005). Similarly, Sundstrom (1999) refers to visual art as a form of communication brought about by the artist to reveal an extension of themselves, exposing what has been hidden and expressing a deeper meaning by using the senses such as color, sound, touch, and even taste. In integrating these two perspectives, art educators can provide opportunities for communication that go beyond literal language and can be translated as a visual form and experienced by students through the senses.

Critical thinking can be defined as students being able to reason effectively, using systems thinking, making judgments and decisions and being able to solve problems (Preparing 21st Century Students For A Global Society, 2010). Art education researchers have found that through various forms of art making and discussions on art, critical thinking skills can be developed with students. For instance, Danko-McGhee and Slutsky (2007) have found that by encouraging elementary students to discuss their own creations, "the young children take on the role of investigators – with teachers acting as facilitators, encouraging them to construct their own theories" (p. 16). By developing child-centered art projects, the researchers found that problem solving and critical

thinking skills were achieved by utilizing less teacher-directed instruction and more child-directed opportunities.

Similarly, creativity and innovation requires students to work in innovative ways with others, implement innovation and think creatively (Preparing 21st Century Students For A Global Society, 2010). As Eisner (2002) states, “the arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives...there are many ways to see and interpret the world” (“10 Lessons the Arts Teach,” 2002). Facilitating creative thinking skills requires educators to think of visual art as more than just a field solely devoted to aesthetics. Discussions on art and thinking of other ways to approach an artwork allow students to think creatively.

The third skill, collaboration, is important for the 21st century student because “it is inherent of how work is accomplished in our civic and workforce lives” (Preparing 21st Century Students For A Global Society, 2010). In terms of art education, Stuhr, Petrovich-Mwaniki, and Wasson (1992) claim that collaborative efforts between teachers and students can take place with the implementation of a multicultural art curriculum. “Working collaboratively to formulate and carry out investigative tasks...students and teachers will not only value each person’s contributions but recognize the amount of knowledge and critical insights that are attainable through group effort” (Stuhr et al., 1992, p. 22). Being able to understand diverse perspectives through collaborative efforts within their communities will allow students (and teachers) to interact with others in their daily lives acknowledging that other perspectives exist.

The 21st century skills and learning framework guide the ways in which public schools are acknowledging the changing environment of students and society. By focusing on the 4 Cs: communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, educators help prepare students for the workforce in a variety of ways. As discussed, art education researchers have acknowledged that communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration can be achieved through a variety of art making methods. Awareness of this framework helps to situate the context of my thesis because this study will focus on a current elementary school art teacher who applies 21st century learning skills in her classroom.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Multicultural education is a set of strategies in the U.S. education system that addresses issues related to the rapidly changing demographics of students. As a response to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, multicultural educational techniques have been developed for educators to use in the classroom in order to acknowledge the histories, cultures and contributions of diverse groups of people. Recognizing that the United States is moving toward cultural pluralism, the multicultural classroom promotes students to develop their critical thinking skills in a changing society.

The Five Dimensions of Multicultural Education

When multicultural education first emerged in the 1960s, the major focus was on re-structuring the curriculum to include women, cultural groups and ethnic groups. However, according to Banks (1992), merely addressing diversity through content integration is not enough to fully implement a multicultural education. Hence, for it to be successful, it is imperative to understand and analyze the strategies of application. Based

on his research and fieldwork from the emergence of multicultural education in the 1960s through its re-popularization of the 1990s, Banks (1970, 1992) argues that the five dimensions of multicultural education are as follows: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture and social structure.

Content integration involves the extent to which educators incorporate content from a diverse range of cultures in order to illustrate key concepts, generalizations and theories in their subject areas (Banks & Banks 1993). In one approach to content integration, known as The Contributions Approach (Banks & Banks, 2009), isolated facts about ethnic heroes and heroines are inserted into the curriculum, without changing the structure of the lesson plan. This reduces the importance of the cultural group and the lessons become limited to ethnic holidays and celebrations, such as Cinco de Mayo or Martin Luther King Day (Banks & Banks, 2009).

During the construction of knowledge process, the curriculum brings in content from cultural and ethnic groups to the center of the lesson. The focus of the curriculum shifts from the dominant and mainstream groups to the ethnically and culturally diverse so that there are a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives incorporated into the curriculum. Through this process, students can understand how knowledge is constructed and how it reflects the experiences, values and perspectives of its creators (Banks & Banks, 1993).

The third dimension, prejudice reduction, describes the lessons and activities taught by educators in order to help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups (Banks & Banks, 1993). When students are able to collaborate with individuals who share a different perspective, they achieve a cooperative goal and are also able to see that there are multiple perspectives in their community.

Equity pedagogy exists when educators are able to facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups, providing equal learning opportunities (Banks & Banks, 1993).

Finally, empowering school culture and social structure requires the restructuring of the school environment so that students of color will experience educational equality (Banks, 1992). This requires a re-organization of school culture including the attitudes of the teacher and administrators, the testing procedures and the curriculum.

The five dimensions of multicultural education, as developed by Banks, provide a framework for this study. The dimensions address the necessary issues schoolteachers face when teaching in a multicultural classroom and tools that they can use to promote diversity. Since I am conducting research into how an art teacher incorporates pins into a lesson plan related to Mexican art, it is important to consider the wide range of approaches to multicultural education which Banks (1992) describes.

THE MULTICULTURAL ART CURRICULUM

In an attempt to create equal learning opportunities in schools, multiculturalism has been extended into the field of art education by diversifying the curriculum. In an attempt to meet these goals, art education researchers have proposed ways in which art educators can consider the dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 1992; Banks & Banks, 1993) and re-invent their own curriculum.

As part of content integration, Banks (1993) details the importance of educators including examples of artwork from diverse groups of individuals in order to recognize their unique perspectives on themes, issues, concepts and histories. To achieve this goal, art education scholars (Adejumo 2002; Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr 2001; Stuhr, Petrovich-

Mwanicki, & Wasson, 1992) recommend that the art curriculum include the perspectives of artists and other members of the community. Adejumo (2002) suggests “to develop true appreciation for minority cultures and their art, and respect for students from those cultures, the target group may have to be exposed to the cultures and their art through direct and extensive interaction” (p. 38). Similarly, Stuhr et al. (1992) also suggest that in order to investigate diverse perspectives, an educator may consult with an artist, invite an artist into the classroom, or gather more information about an artwork that is written by the artist. In this way, creating a lesson that incorporates the artist or the community from which an artwork is derived from is one aim of a multicultural art curriculum.

To promote equal learning opportunities for students, a multicultural art curriculum should be taught while recognizing the learning styles of each student. Contrary to findings that suggest particular cultural groups have the same learning styles (Wills & Mehan, 2004), art education researchers dispel this myth by claiming that generalizing teaching strategies within a particular ethnic population is problematic. As a proponent for student-centered learning, McFee (1961/70) asserts that students are multidimensional beings whose ranges of reactions and attitudes toward visual arts and visual phenomena are entirely individual and change throughout time and depending on the context. This indicates that teaching methods need to be developed based on the needs of the individual student and should avoid generalizations based on a student’s ethnic or cultural background.

The educator must also practice self-reflection when teaching multicultural art curricula. Andrus (2001) argues, “self-assessment is a prerequisite to developing a

culturally competent pedagogy” (p. 16). By continually monitoring their feelings and attitudes about people different from themselves, the educator will be able to confront difference in the process. Gayles (1978) provides two important ideas for the art educator to consider while preparing a multicultural curriculum:

- Teachers must honor and value cultural difference. Acceptance and respect of other people’s cultures allows us to recognize the fallacy of intellectual inferiority or superiority of a racial or ethnic group.
- Teachers must eliminate the “us versus them” attitude by being able to recognize that a multicultural orientation is beneficial to them (p. 29)

Essentially, teachers who are aware of their own biases and are able to constantly reflect back on their own teaching practices by seeing how this curriculum will also affect them is key.

Drawing on the work of Banks (1993), the five dimensions of multicultural education can be applied to the field of art education by considering these three important features. First, the concept of teachers going out into the community and talking with artists or bringing them into the classroom is a method that art educators can focus on when discussing culturally diverse art. Secondly, developing teaching methods that apply to each individual student, instead of their cultural or ethnic groups, encourages educational equity. And thirdly, the teacher who participates in self-reflection will be able to honor cultural difference and eliminate the “us versus them” (Gayles, 1978) dichotomy.

INFORMATION LITERACY

With the abundance of information that can be retrieved directly from the Internet, information literacy is a key concept that impacts this study. The American Library Association (1989) defines information literacy as a set of skills that require individuals to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (p. 7). Exploring the research that has been conducted on information literacy will ground my topic as my study investigates a social media website and how an educator uses the information she retrieves online for her lesson plan.

The quickly changing information and technology landscape requires increasingly sophisticated information literacy skills for the navigation, evaluation, and use of information (Jenkins, 2006). In the classroom environment where time is of the essence in terms of creating and implementing activities with students, educators are attracted to online materials because of its convenience. Education researchers like Lavery & Reed (2006) argue that PK-12 teachers require a comprehensive understanding of information literacy to guide their curricular choices.

VISUAL CULTURE

New advances in the field of technology within the past few decades in the United States have helped transform society into an information-rich environment where visual images are constantly surrounding us. Studying Pinterest requires research into the visual culture field because the website’s database is dominated by visual images such as advertisements, artworks, photographs and more. Therefore, understanding visual culture will aid in the analysis of pins and pinboards.

Visual culture is a relatively new area of scholarship that explores the ways in which individuals encounter visual images through a variety of platforms such as the Internet, television, or in other aspects of everyday life. Because visual culture intersects many different fields, it can be difficult to assign one simple definition for the term. Mitchell (2002) describes visual culture as a “vision [that] is a cultural construction, that is learned and cultivated, not simply given by nature; that therefore it might have a history related in some yet to be determined way to the history of arts, technologies, media, and social practices” (p. 167). Additionally, Alpers (1996) claims that visual culture “is a culture in which images, as distinguished from texts [are] central to the representation (in the sense of the formulation of knowledge) of the world” (p. 26).

PINTEREST

Overview

Pinterest is a social-media driven website where online visitors are invited to create and share images and videos through a self-curated online collection. Launched in 2011, a 2015 Pew Research report found that the website attracted 31% of total online users, an increased percentage compared with 15% in 2012 (Pew Research). The popularity of Pinterest has increased exponentially according to the website’s active user count. In September 2015, Pinterest announced it reached 100 million online users stating, “what started as a simple visual bookmarking tool quickly became a catalog of ideas that all kinds of interesting people – architects, designers, gardeners, chefs, parents – used to discover creative ideas they wanted to try” (Hwang, 2015). Likewise, according to The EBusiness Guide, Pinterest ranks fourth behind Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn

on a list of the most popular social media websites (“The Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites,” 2016). Based on the data reported that reflects continued growth in users, the website’s relevancy in society, particularly in education, warrants further study.

The popularity of Pinterest can be attributed to the website’s overall design and functionality, which makes it easy for online users to quickly navigate between topics of interest to them. A generated homepage presents users with a grid-like display of images and videos that are shared amongst other users as a way to produce more website traffic. This idea of “social browsing” and “social filtering” are an example of technologies revealing the activity of users in order to recommend or rate information to others based on shared interests, an important concept that social media websites entail (Lerman & Jones, 2006). Used in combination with presentation of visuals, the interface operates on a layout that does not heavily rely on text. According to Ottoni, et al. (2013), “the only textual interaction feasible is to comment on someone’s content, supporting the main idea of the network is to collect and share things users find interesting in an organized and categorized way” (p. 1). These tools also make it easy for the user to avoid the frustrations of other collecting and sharing methods that often interrupt a user’s primary activity – exploring (Marshall & Bly, 2004).

Teaching with Pinterest

The increased popularity of Pinterest, combined with its unique design and functionality has made it a topic of discussion and debate, particularly within the teaching community. Some educators who have reported their experiences using Pinterest in the classroom do see it as a relevant curricular tool. As Schoper (2015) explains, “using all

the features within the Pinterest applications has potential to broaden the use of Pinterest across educational levels and content areas” (p. 71). While some educators would consider incorporating Pinterest into their teaching practice, others are hesitant. “Pressure to create cute classrooms and library displays worthy of Pinterest boards sets unreasonable expectations for teachers and diverts resources from developing meaningful teaching practices” (Miller, 2015, p. 101).

Among those questioning the legitimization of Pinterest are school administrators. John Hughes, the principal of Cottonwood Elementary School in Utah, believes that the site completely erases the most meaningful type of professional development, discussion of the best teaching methods, which, pinboards do not allow for (cited in Cummings, 2015). Regardless, it cannot be denied that many teachers are using the website in some form for curriculum development. A review conducted in 2012 by Edudemia.com found that over 350 pinboards were labeled as “lesson plans”. In combination with this number, over 400 pinboards contained the search key words, “classroom” and over 450 pinboards used the keyword “teachers” (“The Teacher’s Guide to Pinterest”, 2012). The statistics indicate that regardless of the ambivalence some educators have expressed about the use of Pinterest, it is still being used in the teaching community. According to Hooks (2015) this may be due to a number of factors that are appealing to many teachers:

1. Finding (free) ideas quickly: Educators are able to collect numerous lesson plans, project ideas, and websites all in one place.
2. Finding the most up-to-date material: In general, users have immediate access to the current trends since people are constantly pinning to boards. This gives teachers the opportunity to discover new curricular materials quickly at any time.
3. Pinterest as a bookmarking tool: As a bookmarking tool, the pins and pinboards direct users to the original website instead of holding this information on a

separate database. The ability to navigate between Pinterest and other websites found in pins provide educators with access to information that they might not have known existed.

4. Collaborating with other teachers: Creating and sharing pinboards with others gives teachers the opportunity to collaborate with their peers by the ongoing pinning of ideas to pinboards (p. 466-468).

Given the increased popularity and use of Pinterest, it is clear that many users have deemed it to be of value. Likewise, its usefulness as a resource for educators cannot be ignored.

In the next chapter, I will continue to explore the phenomenon related to Mexican art lessons featured on Pinterest by discussing the methodology that will be employed for this study. Additionally, the procedures for collecting data and tools to triangulate research will be addressed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this case study was to analyze Mexican art lessons on Pinterest through two main procedures. The first involved interviewing an art educator to understand what her criteria was for locating pins that she did and did not find feasible for this art lesson. During this process, the participant was able to locate twelve pins and was asked a series of survey questions that provided insight into the decision making process that one art educator used when perusing Pinterest as a curricular source for art lessons. In addition to this, the twelve pins that the participant identified served as the artifacts that I later examined through content analysis. From this process, several themes emerged that reflected the kinds of pins available to users who search for Mexican art lessons on Pinterest.

Given the social context and the exploratory nature of this study, I employed qualitative research methods. Van Maanen (1979) describes qualitative research as “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (p. 520). Moreover, qualitative researchers are interested in uncovering experiences people have in the world, focusing on the participants’ point of view rather than the researcher’s stance (Merriam, 2009). However, when analyzing data obtained from the participant, it is important for the researcher to be aware of any subjectivity as it may shape collection and interpretation of the data. In undertaking this research, I had to recognize my own biases.

As discussed in Chapter One, what guided my interest in conducting this study was from my own curiosity after reading several scholarly articles related to multicultural art lessons found online. Therefore, I had already encountered a range of Mexican art lessons that were being disseminated online by a variety of websites. Additionally, I have an academic background in art history particularly, studying Contemporary Mexican art and Mesoamerican art. Because of this, I believe in the importance of incorporating art history into the art curriculum in addition to the art-making project. My own cultural heritage was another bias that I had to be aware of. All of these biases I was aware of during the data collection and analysis procedures.

INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY

Merriam (2002) classifies a case study as a specific qualitative research method, particularly “an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit as an individual, group, institution, or community” (p. 8). Pinterest served as the electronically based community for my case study. It was chosen because it provided an abundance of user activity that increases daily on a platform that is easily accessible to people worldwide. The registered Pinterest users make up an online community of individuals who are interested in creating and sharing pins and pinboards. However, for the purposes of conducting an intense analysis of this phenomenon, studying one participant was key in order to obtain in-depth understanding of the decisions art teachers make when selecting art lessons based on culture – Mexican art lessons.

It is also imperative to delimit the object of study, stating the confines of the data, and participating in extensive analysis in order to bring the case into focus (Yazan, 2002). Contrary to Yazan's approach, however, it was impossible to thoroughly examine every pinboard and pin for "Mexican art lessons." The challenge, therefore, was to demarcate the boundaries of this study. This was accomplished through purposeful sampling by selecting a key participant to prepare a lesson for an existing group of students. The focal point of my study was determined by the participant's use of Pinterest. The keyword search specified the parameters of this study ("Mexican art lessons") that provided the participant with enough information to examine the web page and make selections to create a feasible lesson plan. The selection criteria used by the participant and the factors that influenced her decisions for selecting pins to use in her lesson was essential for this study.

Arriving at a conclusion without making over generalizations requires the use of qualitative data from an array of sources. As Yin explains, the case study's unique strength is "its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence - documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations" (Yin, 2009, p. 8). The data sources used for this study consisted of artifacts (Pinterest boards), a semi-structured interview, and direct observations.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Purposeful sampling entails identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon

of interest (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Thus, selecting an art educator with extensive teaching experience, background in art education, and Pinterest user would ensure that data would yield relevant information for the study. As criteria-based selection entails, I “create[d] a list of the attributes essential [to my study and then] proceed[ed] to find or locate a unit matching the list” (LeCompte and Preissle as cited in Merriam, 1998). The criteria for selection was as follows:

1. An art teacher currently employed within thirty miles of Austin, Texas.
2. Possess a minimum of 15 years teaching experience.
3. Express a willingness to participate in a semi-structured interview.
4. Familiarity with Pinterest.

The teacher who met the criteria was a Caucasian woman with twenty-two years of public school teaching experience in visual art. Ogden (2008) advocates for pseudonyms by stating that “pseudonyms are very useful for research in sensitive topics, particularly... when pseudonyms are used, it is important that this be clearly identified in any dissemination of finds” (p. 16). Therefore, going forward, she will be referred to using the pseudonym, “Ms. Sunny.” At the time of this investigation, Ms. Sunny had recently won the 2016 Texas Art Education Association Outstanding Elementary Art Educator award. She had also been employed as a full-time elementary school art teacher at a public school in an Austin. This school serves an upper middle-class neighborhood in a suburb outside of the city. She was teaching an average of 24 students per class in grades Kindergarten through fifth, with a total of 288 students per week.

Ms. Sunny described her Pinterest experience as “somewhat” of an active account because she uses it as a source for inspiration rather than a teaching resource (see Appendix A). When asked to name the sources she typically uses to develop lesson plans, she cited Texas Art Education Association (TAEA) workshops and museum collections. She admitted to past use of Pinterest for lesson plan preparation but qualified her answer by saying it was only used to “find inspiration...to lead to something else” (personal communication, March 8, 2016) for finding art lessons. Ms. Sunny’s previous research about the Latino culture, she said, was done in preparation for “culture nights” at the school where she worked at the time of the interview.

DATA COLLECTION

Interview Format and Questions

A semi-structured interview technique was also used to collect data. I chose this strategy because it is designed as an interview guide with a list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order and are open-ended (Bernard & Bernard, 2012). An important aspect of Bernard’s approach that proved to be essential for this case study was its allowance for the natural flow of conversation and follow up questions.

In order to determine the criteria Ms. Sunny used to prepare a lesson plan using Pinterest, four sets of survey questions were used to collect data (see Table 1). As mentioned earlier, none of the questions asked, with the exception of one, could be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” response. Therefore, the interview format allowed Ms. Sunny to openly discuss her teaching pedagogy and criteria for lesson plan development. The participant’s responses to questions about all pins she reviewed had to

be analyzed in the context of her background and stated teaching objective (see Appendix A and Appendix B). In order to accurately capture the discussion, I chose to make an audio recording of the interview. The added benefit of the audio recording was its substantiation of the study results.

| Data Source | Purpose |
|--|---|
| Interviewee background information (see Appendix A) | To gather information about the participant's educational training, teaching experience, current teaching assignment and working knowledge of Pinterest. |
| Pre and post interview questions (see Appendix B) | To identify the teaching objectives when preparing a lesson plan on Mexican art lessons and determining if the objectives had been met or changed as a result of using Pinterest. |
| Survey questions for the pins that were selected by the participant (see Appendix C) | To identify criteria and gain insight into the participant's decision to pin the items to the "keep" pin board created to prepare the lesson plan. |
| Survey questions for the pins that were not selected by the participant (see Appendix D) | To identify criteria and gain insight into the participant's decision to pin the items to the "discard" pin board. These pins were selected for potential use in lesson plan preparation. Upon further examination, Ms. Sunny deemed them to be of no use to her lesson plan. |
| A transcription of the complete interview with Ms. Sunny (see Appendix E) | To gather her complete responses to all interview questions. |

Table 1: Data Collection Tools.

Interview Process

The two-hour long interview was conducted in Ms. Sunny's classroom approximately two hours following student dismissal. No witnesses were present and no time limitations were set. After collecting Ms. Sunny's background information, I gave her the following instructions verbally:

- A. Prepare a lesson on Mexican art for your current students using Pinterest.
- B. State your teaching objective for the lesson. You have the option to change your teaching objective after using Pinterest.
- C. Using a newly created and unused Pinterest account named, "Teacher," enter the keywords, "Mexican art lessons," in the search bar found on the home page of the new account.
- D. Review the search results and start identifying pins for review.
- E. Once you have reviewed the pin, decide whether or not it will be used for the lesson.
- F. Using two pinboards created for this study, assign the selected pin to either the "keep" or "release" pinboard. After you pin the item, I will add a number in the comments section of the pin for tracking purposes.
- G. Stop pinning items onto the boards once you believe you have everything needed to prepare the lesson.

When the pin selection exercise ended, I asked Ms. Sunny if her teaching objective – as stated prior to the exercise – remained the same. We then moved to the next phase of the interview, which was a review and discussion of all pins appearing on

the “keep” and “release” pinboards. A questionnaire was used for each pin in order to identify the criteria Ms. Sunny used to prepare her lesson (see Appendix C and Appendix D). The questions were brief and designed to allow me, as the interviewer, to follow the natural trajectories (Thomas 2011) that are essential in collecting and synthesizing the qualitative data required for an instrumental case study.

PINS AS PHYSICAL ARTIFACTS

When conducting case studies, physical artifacts “can be tools, instruments, or some other physical evidence that may be collected during the study as part of a field visit” (Tellis, p. 7, 1997). Yin (1994) further identifies these artifacts by exclaiming that they can include photographs, computer downloads, or everyday objects that provide insight into both cultural and technical operations. Ms. Sunny’s selections of pins during the lesson plan preparation exercise were the artifacts that I would later study in more detail by performing a content analysis. Furthermore, a review of the search results and website views that resulted in her selections provided evidence needed to examine the pins and pinboards available for users who choose to use Pinterest for preparing a lesson on Mexican art.

DIRECT OBSERVATIONS

Yin (2009) explains, “if a case study is about a new technology or a school curriculum, for instance, observations of the technology or curriculum at work are invaluable aids for understanding the actual uses of the technology or curriculum or any potential problems being encountered” (p. 110). When Ms. Sunny used Pinterest to search for the useful and not so useful pins containing content and visuals for her lesson, I became a direct observer. In this case, the direct observation was used to study Ms.

Sunny's navigation of the Pinterest search results webpage as well as her verbal and non-verbal responses while using Pinterest. Yin (2009) suggests that "the conventional manner of collecting observational data takes the form of using your own five senses, taking field notes, and ultimately creating a narrative based on what you might have seen, heard, or otherwise sensed" (p. 11). My observation of Ms. Sunny's use of Pinterest made her comments about the pins more meaningful as I could see the various choices she selected from. One of the major strengths of direct observation is that it is unobtrusive and does not require direct interaction with participants (Adler, 1994). Therefore, I did not answer questions, provide feedback or comment on what I observed as Ms. Sunny made her Pinterest selections.

SEEING WHAT'S THERE

In order to answer my two central research questions, it was crucial to investigate what Pinterest had to offer in terms of its pins related to Mexican art lessons and how an art educator would be able to apply her own lesson plan selection criteria. This required an analysis of Ms. Sunny's responses to interview questions related to her pin selections as well as analyzing the pins themselves.

DATA ANALYSIS

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

As a method of analysis CDA "centers on authentic everyday communication in institutional, media [such as the Internet], political or other locations" (Wodak, 1999, p. 8). CDA consists of three phases of analysis: description, interpretation and explanation (see Figure 6). By describing the text and forming an interpretation of meaning, CDA seeks to link texts at a micro-level (textual level) with macro-level power structures

(sociocultural practice), allowing researchers to become involved in a social analysis (Fairclough, 1996).

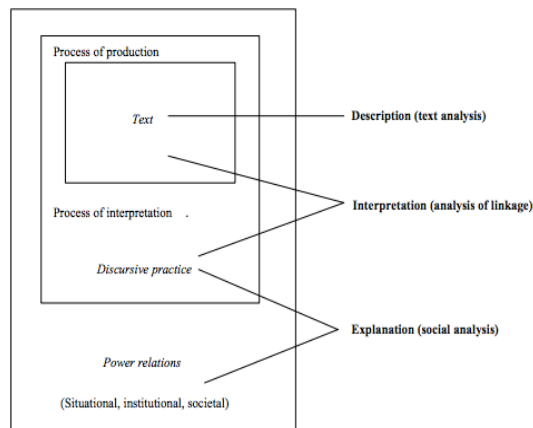


Figure 6: Dimensions of discourse (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 152).

Fairclough (1995) describes and distinguishes between micro and macro levels respectfully as “speech genres” and “discursive types”. Based on Fairclough’s method for analysis, Thompson (2004) further develops this framework by identifying text genres as the common components of everyday conversation and discursive types as being themes that are most familiar to interpretive researchers (see Tables 2 and 3). As Thompson (2004) states, “it is the mixing of text genres and discursive types within units of discursive practice that allows contestable statements and assumptions to be voiced in a seemingly neutral – even normative – behavior” (p. 6). Thus, the text genres and discursive types are outcomes of the process of production and interpretation of text. The selection of this framework to tabulate my results will serve as the method for CDA of Ms. Sunny’s transcribed interview. In this way, the hidden relationship between Ms. Sunny’s criteria for the selection of pins based on their content will be revealed.

| |
|---------------------|
| Text Genre (TG) |
| Confidence |
| Factual Information |
| Humor |
| Persuasion |
| Uncertainty |

Table 2: Text genres identified by Thompson (2004).

| |
|---|
| Discursive Type (DT) |
| Neutrality: discursive type refers to discourses that are not taking sides on a topic of discussion |
| Corporation: discursive type refers to discourses that imply collaboration |
| Technological optimism: refers to discourses that acknowledge the technology's potentials |
| Pragmatism: discursive type refers to discourse addressing practical issues |
| Legitimacy: discourse discursive type refers to authoritative discourse |
| Technocracy: discursive type refers to elite technological expertise |

Table 3: Discursive types identified by Thompson (2004).

I analyzed a transcription of my interview with Ms. Sunny utilizing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework (1989, 1995), which locates social structures within a dialectical relationship with social activities. Because I conducted a semi-structured interview, the pin selection questions naturally became a dialogue in which Ms. Sunny explained her thought process and provided more detail about her teaching practice and pedagogical ideologies. At times, these details revealed information that

went beyond the scope of my research. It became clear to me that tracing recurring keywords and highlighting important terms that she used in her responses would not be enough. Instead, I wanted to discover what these words and phrases meant and how they related to the phenomenon that I was studying. Using a technique like CDA allowed me to examine the text in more detail, partaking in an in-depth analysis that provided me with unexpected knowledge that was not apparent to me during the interview procedure.

Content Analysis

To answer my second research question: “What kinds of pins and pin boards are available to online users who search ‘Mexican art lessons’ on Pinterest?” I put the twelve pins that Ms. Sunny selected through a coding criterion (see Table 4). Focusing on six key features of the pin, I analyzed each pin by focusing on both the notations and the image of the artwork it featured. By organizing the data in this manner, I was able to identify several aspects of the pin that helped answer my research question, but more importantly, this data analysis also lead me to question other aspects of Pinterest that I had not considered prior to this exercise. These findings will be discussed later in Chapter Five.

| Image | Analysis of Pin |
|---------------------------------|--|
| (Screenshot of the pin’s image) | Subject matter Medium/Media Colors used Re-pinned ranking Likes ranking Website information |

Table 4: Content analysis of Ms. Sunny’s pins.

VALIDITY

This study sought to examine pins and pinboards related to Mexican art lessons as well as including a participant interview in order to triangulate data. Denzin (1978) mentions that triangulation can be defined as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. The interview with Ms. Sunny in combination with an analysis of the pins allowed me to gain a better understanding of a teacher's navigation of Pinterest and on what was available for pinning. However, obtaining insight from a an art educator with different teaching experiences than my own helped to make this study valid. As Rogers (2004) suggests, "if we triangulate our data, member check with participants, and establish and maintain a paper trail of our theorizing and analytic moves, we can claim that our CDA is valid or an accurate representation of 'reality'" (p. 249).

RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY

As a newcomer to the field of qualitative research, I was very cognizant of the potential for distortion or bias in my study. Before interviewing Ms. Sunny, I drafted interview questions that were framed to explore the participant's opinions, not my beliefs. I corroborated that my questions did not reveal my biases by conducting mock interviews with a critical friend, an individual who agreed to offer constructive criticism. The practice session resulted in my delivery and sharpening the delivery and format for interview in order to eliminate the potential for bias. "Researchers are encouraged to reflect on and record their interpretations, and they are reminded that the validity of their

interpretations is dependent on being able to demonstrate how they were reached” (Boulton and Hammersley, 1996).

CONCLUSION

Through the use of Fairclough’s CDA framework (1989, 1995) and content analysis, analyzing pins selected by Ms. Sunny provided insight into the phenomenon of a case in which an art educator uses Pinterest as a curricular resource to develop an art lesson for her students.

In the next chapter, I will further report on results of the collected data by revealing selections of text from Ms. Sunny’s interview and including screenshots of the twelve pins that she selected. In conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis of the interview with Ms. Sunny about the selection of pins, her criteria for the lesson plan will be analyzed and interpreted. Similarly, through a content analysis of the individual pins, emergent themes and recurring information will be revealed and their implications for using Pinterest as a curricular tool.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Data

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the case study. As described in Chapter Three, the first step in the process required transcribing the interview with Ms. Sunny. While Ms. Sunny was able to prepare a lesson on Mexican art with great ease, synthesizing her responses to the twelve pins she selected required careful organization and examination. As the data shows, Ms. Sunny's selections were based on presentation of the images in each pin. The pin descriptions were secondary and pin statistics (the number of "likes" and "repins") were never mentioned. My analysis of text that I gathered from Ms. Sunny's interview provided an abundance of information about her pin selection criteria. My investigation also included a content analysis of all pins by applying my studio art knowledge, review user comments and evaluate pin statistics.

PIN SELECTION DISCOVERIES

Seeing Is Believing

In analyzing the text of the interviews, there were recurring text genres that indicated Ms. Sunny relied on the visual elements of the pins (whether text or image) for inclusion in her lesson plan. In this respect, Ms. Sunny engaged in a "seeing is believing" mindset by trusting the image found that, in many cases, was accompanied by minimal text. These pins were Pin #1, Pin #2, Pin #4 and Pin #9.

After selecting Pin #1, she stated the image was an example of “Amate”¹ (see Table 5). A level of uncertainty was established as she asked if her pronunciation of this Spanish term was correct. As a researcher that was observing, I chose not to answer her question. While Ms. Sunny may not have been confident of the pronunciation, she accurately described the characteristics of Oaxaca² folk art in great detail. She claimed that pin #1 (see Figure 7) was selected because the content offered a pragmatic representation of the artwork. Its selection turned out to be significant as it set the tone for subsequent selections.


| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Mexican bark painting – stunningly beautiful” Number of Times Re- pinned: 93 Number of Times Liked: 21 Saved from: lonelyplanetimages.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: Animals and nature Medium: Paint on paper Colors used: Vibrant blues, yellows, greens, oranges in combination with some black and white Re-pinned ranking: 5/12 Likes ranking: 4/12 Website information: This website hosts a variety of photographs taken from travelers from all over the world</p> |
|--|---|--|

Figure 7: Pin #1, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.

¹ Amate is the Spanish term for “bark paper.”

² Oaxaca is a state in southern Mexico known for its indigenous cultures.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|--|---|
| Uncertainty – “ <i>I would show “amate”... is that how you say it?</i> ” The teacher is unsure of the proper pronunciation of the Spanish word, “Amate.” | Corporatism – “ <i>The kids will do a discussion...</i> ” Explains the purpose of the pin is for an open-ended discussion with her students. Pragmatism – “ <i>...I thought because of the colors and the use of different types of animals, not necessarily a real animal color, so they can be a little more creative in their colors and their designs.</i> ” Cites this pin as a good example of fictitious animals and the use of colors that are not typically seen on real animals. | Pinterest does not offer a pronunciation guide for users. Details a specific lesson plan including media, order of presentation and discussion points. |

Table 5: Text analysis of Pin #1.

With the selection of Pin #2, Ms. Sunny continued her focus on Oaxaca art and questioned the authenticity of the artwork that the pin featured for the first time (see Table 6). Her concern about authenticity continued with the selection of Pin #4 and Pin #9. However, such concern was overridden by her desire to find material that would engage students in a discussion about Mexican art. As an example, she stated that the image in Pin #2 looked like a “varmint” (see Figure 8), which her students had an affinity for. Using art-making techniques to enhance student learning was also evident in the selection of Pin #4 when she acknowledged the challenge that construction of a sculpture would pose for students (see Table 7). In selecting Pin #9, she expressed a desire to include student artwork in her presentation (see Table 8).

Ms. Sunny's commentary during the pin selection process coupled with her responses to my interview questions indicated a strong understanding of Mexican art. My discovery of her expertise was surprising based on her humble responses to my pre-interview questions (see Appendix B). During a content analysis, it is also interesting to note that my research of Pin #4 revealed that the image was saved from E-Bay. The pinner's description states, "wood carving from Alebrije Oaxaca Mexico" (see Figure 8). "Alebrije"³ is not a not a location; rather, it is a type of Oaxaca-Mexican folk art. Clearly, Ms. Sunny's skepticism about the authenticity of this pin was warranted.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Uncertainty – <i>"I guess I don't really know for sure but just looking at it, it looks like a good example of 'Oaxacan' so I guess I don't really know if it's the real thing but it looks like a good image..."</i> The authenticity of the image is questioned.</p> <p>Factual information – <i>"...It looks a little bit like a varmint ...but the true ones are made out of wood so ours will be made out of clay."</i> Assuming the image is authentic, the teacher correctly describes Oaxacan folk art as colorful fictitious creatures made of wood.</p> <p>Confidence – <i>"I don't know if this is authentic or not but the true ones are made out of wood so ours will be made out of clay."</i> The selection of this pin to teach Oaxacan art can be achieved by substituting clay for wood.</p> | <p>Neutrality – <i>"So if I were doing a power point I would use that as an example of the sculpture."</i> Questioning the authenticity of the image does not exclude its use for the lesson plan.</p> <p>Corporatism – <i>"The kids could connect to it because it looks a little bit like a varmint and they like varmints."</i> When selecting this pin, consideration was given to the students' affinity toward varmints.</p> <p>Pragmatism – <i>"And if you're going to do a long tail it's not going to be able to stick up like that because it wouldn't be very supportive."</i> Acknowledges the construction of the sculpture (the tail) might be problematic because the students will use clay instead of wood.</p> | <p>The use of Pinterest requires researching the source of the pin in order to validate its authenticity.</p> <p>The teacher demonstrates the essential elements for a lesson plan: a) problem solving due to the inability to use wood in the classroom b) student engagement using items that are of interest to them and c) including students in discussion of building the sculpture.</p> |

Table 6: Text analysis of Pin #2.

³ Alebrijes are brightly colored sculptures of fantastical creatures, derived from Oaxacan-Mexican folk art.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|--|---|
| Uncertainty – “It looks like it’s from “Oaxaca”... it says it’s a Oaxacan wood carved frog so I would hopefully think it’s the real deal.” The authenticity of the image is questioned. | Neutrality – “But I would also use it as an example for the wood versus clay.” Questioning the authenticity of the image does not exclude its use for the lesson plan. Pragmatism – “I would also use it as an example for the wood versus clay.” Making Oaxacan folk art can be achieved using clay instead of wood. | Even though the authenticity is questioned and the construction of the sculpture poses a challenge for students, the teacher does not omit this pin from her selection. |

Table 7: Text analysis of Pin #4.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|---|---|---|
| Uncertainty – “This one I wasn’t sure if it was the real deal. It says it’s from Mexico Art Organization but I didn’t know if it was or if it was just a student piece.” The pin’s description is questioned: she is unsure if it is from an actual organization or if it is a student work. | Neutrality – “I might not even use it if it wasn’t just because I thought I probably had enough examples to show.” The abundance of pins, not the uncertainty of the work as a student piece, is the reason why the pin may be excluded from the lesson. | Pin descriptions are not reliable. Additional research is required to verify information provided by Pinterest users. Imagery, not text, drives user selection of pins. A large number and broad range of examples for use in art lesson can be found on the Pinterest website. |

Table 8: Text analysis of Pin #9.


| | | |
|---|---|--|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Mexico: Alebrijes :papier mache and/or plaster. We painted our MONSTERS solid colors. Nice spin on the Monster project would be Saved from: liceodeapodaca5.blogspot.com (An art teacher’s blog) to research monsters from other cultures.” Number of Times Re-pinned: 118 Number of Times Liked: 9 Saved from: liceodeapodaca5.blogspot.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: An imaginary creature/monster Medium: Sculpture Colors used: Bright purple, orange, green, blue, and turquoise Re-pinned ranking: 4/12 Likes ranking: 7/12 Website information: A 5th grade English teacher’s blog</p> |
|---|---|--|

Figure 8: Pin #2, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.


| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Mexican Oaxacan wood carving from alebrije Oaxaca Mexico hand crafted art” Number of Times Re-pinned: 77 Number of Times Liked: 4 Saved from: ebay.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: Abstracted frog Medium: Sculpture Colors used: Bright green, yellow, orange, turquoise, white, black, pink Re-pinned ranking: 8/12 Likes ranking: 10/12 Website information: A website devoted to buying and selling items through auctions</p> |
|---|---|---|

Figure 9: Pin #4, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.


| | | |
|---|---|--|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “The Nahua Indians of Guerrero, Mexico have the amazing skill of painting beautiful designs on paper made from the bark of trees.” Number of Times Re-pinned: 75 Number of Times Liked: 11 Saved from: mexicoart.org</p> | <p>Subject matter: A bird and nature Medium: Paint on paper Colors used: Green, orange, red, yellow Re-pinned ranking: 9/12 Likes ranking: 6/12 Website information: A blog solely devoted to Mexican art</p> |
|---|---|--|

Figure 10: Pin #9, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.

Image is Everything

The selection of Pin #3, Pin #5, Pin #6 and Pin #10 reflected Ms. Sunny’s continued focus on facilitating a discussion of Mexican art by providing a variety of visually appealing material for elementary students in her power point presentation (see Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12). The use of bright colors, various media, designs and fictitious animals were among the reasons cited for selecting these pins. It is also, perhaps, the reason why Ms. Sunny decided to change the objective of her lesson from a general overview of Mexican art to a study of Oaxaca folk art. Her limited commentary about these pins reflected her confidence in using each pin for a specific purpose.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|---|--|--|
| Confidence – “ <i>It’s a good visual again for the bark paintings.</i> ” Is succinct in her decision to include this pin in her lesson because of the colors used and the composition. | Pragmatism – “ <i>The kids will see it doesn’t have to be symmetrical like the other one was.</i> ” Deliberate selection of a piece that is different from previous selections. | Lessons should provide students with examples of the different uses of media, colors and compositions in order to establish a connection with every student and cultivate their interest in art. |

Table 9: Text analysis of Pin #3.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|--|---|
| Confidence – “ <i>I like to give the kids several things to see, not just one or two.</i> ” The selection of several images for the mock lesson plan is consistent with current teaching practices. | Pragmatism – “ <i>an example of the artist focusing on one animal for this one [points to the pin] instead of the grouping...</i> ” Validates the use of the pin because of one animal being portrayed instead of multiple. | Using a variety of colorful images that are known to be of special interest to students (animals) is a useful pedagogical strategy. |

Table 10: Text analysis of Pin #5.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|--|---|
| Confidence – “ <i>So maybe focus on one particular image [artwork] in the power point and just show some other examples and talk about the balance and the composition of them.</i> ” Specifies how the pin will be used in relation to other pins selected in order to frame the discussion about balance and composition. | Pragmatism – “ <i>Probably after making the power point, we might discuss one of these more intensely and then not discuss the other ones as much.</i> ” Refers to the planned use of the first five pins selected and adjusts the lesson plan while explaining the reasons for selecting this pin (pin 6). | The teacher considers the selection of previous pins in her makeshift power point and what to talk about during the discussion with students. |

Table 11: Text analysis of Pin #6.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Confidence – “<i>This one looked like student work to me so I thought this might be a nice one to put in based on the image.</i>” Participant confidently asserts that the artwork in the pin is from a student and is able to establish that the image did attract her to the pin.</p> <p>Humor – “[laughs] I’m going to have to write this lesson plan down, its getting better and better! <u>It kinda evolves.</u>” Jokingly admits the usefulness of her lesson plan by claiming that she needs to write the lesson plan down.</p> | <p>Pragmatism – “<i>...are they going to change their colors when they get to the clay piece or are they going to be the same?</i>” The educator asks practical questions about color that her students would have to think about when they create their artwork.</p> <p>Technological optimism – states that her lesson plan using Pinterest “<i>kinda evolves</i>” and gradually becomes better.</p> | <p>Selected this pin to show in the power point because the image looked like student work.</p> <p>States some discussion questions she would ask her students to consider about their own bark painting pieces.</p> <p>States that she is pleased with her lesson so far.</p> |

Table 12: Text analysis of Pin #10.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “All about Mexican traditional folkart: ‘Amate Painting’” Number of Times Re-pinned: 609 Number of Times Liked: 77 Saved from: kidworldcitizen.org</p> | <p>Subject matter: Birds and nature Medium: Paint, graphic design Colors used: Vivid red, green, blue + black and white Re-pinned ranking: 1/12 Likes ranking: 1/12 Website information: An ESL and Spanish teacher’s blog</p> |
|---|---|---|

Figure 11: Pin #3, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.


| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Original Amate Mexican folk art painting on Tree Bark Paper, Primitive, Naïve, S” Number of Times Re-pinned: 61 Number of Times Liked: 6 Saved from: ebay.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: An abstracted animal with nature Medium: Paint on paper Colors used: (Opaque) yellow, red, green, orange, blue, purple + some black and white Re-pinned ranking: 11/12 Likes ranking: 9/12 Website information: A website devoted to buying and selling items through auctions</p> |
|---|--|--|

Figure 12: Pin #5, categorized in “Keep” pinboard.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Artopotamus: Yoshimi Battle, Warhol Portraits, Oaxaca Animals, Keith Haring” Number of Times Re-pinned: 488 Number of Times Liked: 49 Saved from: acquiringexpensivehobbies.blogspot.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: An animal, maybe a fox or coyote Medium: Sculpture Colors used: Bright purple, yellow, green, red, black, orange Re-pinned ranking: 3/12 Likes ranking: 3/12 Website information: An art teacher’s blog</p> |
|--|--|---|

Figure 13: Pin #6, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “There’s a Dragon in my Art Room: Faux Mexican ‘bark’ paintings!” Number of Times Re-pinned: 599 Number of Times Liked: 52 Saved from: plbrown.blogspot.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: Two lizards and a bird with leaves and flowers Medium: Paint on paper Colors used: Bright red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple (in a rainbow effect) Re-pinned ranking: 2/12 Likes ranking: 11/12 Website information: A retired art teacher’s blog</p> |
|---|--|--|

Figure 14: Pin #10, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.

The Art Activity

Ms. Sunny’s explanation for selecting of Pin #7 and Pin #8 reflected her desire to promote collaboration in problem solving by guiding her students’ imagination in an art activity (see Table 14 and 15). Ms. Sunny claimed that she selected Pin #7 because of the “good” use of designs taken from Amate paintings. Ms. Sunny considered the artist’s technical applications of the paint to create various designs. Executing a similar design presented an excellent problem solving opportunity for the students. Selection of Pin #8 presented another opportunity to problem solve the construction of a sculpture. Ms. Sunny’s preference for the designs that the artist used guided what she wanted her students to achieve in their execution of this artwork.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|---|--|--|
| Factual information – <i>“And it also has really good designs on it that are taken from Amate bark paintings.”</i> Recognizes the designs are reminiscent of Amate bark paintings. | Legitimacy – <i>“...can be something from their imagination or a combination.”</i> The educator takes on an authoritative position by stating the directions for the students’ artwork. | The teacher’s use of visuals in the art lesson has shifted from a discussion about composition to finding sources of inspiration for the art activity. |

Table 13: Text analysis of Pin #7.


| | | |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Amate, Mexican bark art! Yay Amate! I did an amate project with third and fourth grade classes last year on brown kraft paper and they turned out great!”</p> <p>Number of Times Re-pinned: 80</p> <p>Number of Times Liked: 14</p> <p>Saved from: acquiringexpensivehobbies.blogspot.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: Birds and nature</p> <p>Medium: Paint on paper</p> <p>Colors used: Vivid green, yellow, orange, purple, turquoise, red</p> <p>Re-pinned ranking: 7/12</p> <p>Likes ranking: 5/12</p> <p>Website information: An art teacher’s blog</p> |
|--|--|--|

Figure 15: Pin #7, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|---|--|
| Confidence – “ <i>So they have to problem solve that.</i> ” Specifies how she will guide the students in using the designs found in this pin. | Corporatism – “ <i>I like the designs that the artist put on the actual piece, like the lines and shape designs. So, when the kids do this sculpture piece, they would have to include that on theirs too.</i> ” The use of a design on the sculpture piece is a collaborative effort by the students. | An educator’s preference guides the design of artwork. |

Table 14: Text analysis of Pin #8.


| | | |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Mexican Folk Art Sculptures Created by Residents of Oaxaca – My Modern Met” Number of Times Re-pinned: 74 Number of Times Liked: 8 Saved from: mymodernmet.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: An abstracted cat Medium: Sculpture Colors used: Blue, turquoise, yellow, purple Re-pinned ranking: 10/12 Likes ranking: 8/12 Website information: A photograph sharing blog with content contributed by designers and artists</p> |
|--|--|---|

Figure 16: Pin #8, categorized in the “Keep” pinboard.

The Opposite of Like is Dislike

After discussing the ten pins on the “keep” board, Ms. Sunny’s pedagogic approach was clear and consistent. Relying heavily on the visual imagery and not on the accompanying text or pin statistics, her explanation of the two discarded pins produced no surprises. Ms. Sunny stated that Pin #11 was not used because the visual display of papers on a bulletin board could not be integrated into a power point presentation that had been carefully crafted in her mind upon selecting her first pin (see Table 15). The second and final pin discarded – Pin #12 – did not reflect Ms. Sunny’s devotion to challenging her students with bona fide Mexican art (see Table 16), as these images are children’s artworks in the style of Amate paintings. Acutely aware of the capabilities of her elementary students, she deemed Pin #12 unworthy of use in the lesson plan because it was not a good example of student work. Focusing again on imagery and authenticity of the objects, Ms. Sunny described the pin as “step-by-step.” My analysis of the pin statistics show that Pin #11 and #12 were not popular with other users as well. Pin #11 showed that it was “liked” 3 times and Pin #12 showed that it was liked 4 times. Compare these numbers to Pin #3 which had 77 number of likes. Therefore, I found that one of the unfortunate drawbacks of Pinterest is that there is no explanation for the (un)popularity of pins unless a user chooses to post a comment.

| Description (Text Genres) | Interpretation (Discursive Type) | Explanation (Social Practice) |
|--|---|--|
| Confidence – “ <i>when I saw this I thought, oh maybe I'm going to use it, but then after looking at it, ugh! I don't like the visual of it.</i> ” Clearly states her dislikes about the pin in a confident manner. | Pragmatism – “ <i>So the visual wouldn't help me at all for my power point because it's a bunch of papers on a bulletin board and its not very direct.</i> ” States that it is not a practical pin to use in her power point because the visual is not direct. | States her level of distaste for the pin and explains her reasoning behind designating it as a pin that is not useful. |

Table 15: Text analysis of Pin #11.

| (Text Genres) | (Discursive Type) | (Social Practice) |
|--|--|---|
| Confidence – “ <i>And it's not a good example of student work. I would want them [students] to be pushed a little bit harder. And they look a little too step-by-step with the birds.</i> ” Is confident about her goals for her lesson and the reasoning behind not choosing this pin. | <p>Corporation – “<i>We'll do step-by-step in our sketchbook if it was the first time we were drawing birds or something. We might do some step-by-step and talk about the shapes and how birds are certain shapes and how the shapes can be put together to create a bird but we wouldn't use that particular drawing for a project.</i>” Suggests a level of collaboration during the sketchbook processing by using “we” as she explains how she would use step-by-step techniques in the sketches.</p> <p>Pragmatism – “<i>It would be like a little mini lesson in their sketchbook to get them more comfortable. I just don't want the artwork to all end up looking the same.</i>” States that she avoids the issue of step-by-step projects with her students because they start to look the same.</p> | <p>Discloses her reasoning for not choosing this pin and her distaste for step-by-step projects.</p> <p>Explains that step-by-step projects are rarely used in the classroom. Only used to sketch something new for the first time.</p> |

Table 16: Text analysis of Pin #12.


| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Art at Becker Middle School: Amate Bark Painting” Number of Times Re-pinned: 55 Number of Times Liked: 3 Saved from: beckermiddleart.blogspot.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: Abstracted nature Medium: Paint on paper Colors used: Green, yellow, orange, blue, purple Re-pinned ranking: 12/12 Likes ranking: 12/12 Website information: A blog devoted to the art program</p> |
|---|--|---|

Figure 17: Pin #11, categorized in the “Release” pinboard.


| | | |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>Pin Description: “Amate inspired art projects by first grade” Number of Times Re-pinned: 82 Number of Times Liked: 4 Saved from: cassiestephens.blogspot.com</p> | <p>Subject matter: Birds and nature Medium: Paint on paper Colors used: Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple Re-pinned ranking: 6/12 Likes ranking: 11/12 Website information: An art teacher’s blog</p> |
|--|--|--|

Figure 18: Pin #12, categorized in the “Release” pinboard.

Conclusion

As this chapter outlines, an art teacher’s use of Pinterest to search for curricular lessons on Mexican art reveals many discoveries.

During the pin review process, Ms. Sunny did not rely on the statics of the pins such as, the number of times a pin was “liked” or “re-pinned” by other Pinterest users. This was due, in part, by her previous knowledge of Oaxaca art and other Latin American art (see Appendix A). Instead of considering the statistics or user comments for each pin, Ms. Sunny’s selections were influenced by the aesthetic appeal of visual images. Additionally, she knew enough about Mexican art to ask herself questions in order to determine if the images were worthy of staying in the “Keep” pinboard. From examining the text analyses of each pin, her justifications for selecting examples of Mexican art answered the following questions:

- a) Is this authentic?
- b) Does the image capture the true essence of Oaxaca art?
- c) Can my students relate to this image in some way?
- d) Will the pin promote student creativity and problem solving?
- e) Is the image a good example of student artwork?
- f) Will this pin be used for the power point presentation or for the art activity itself?
- g) Can the pins be tied together to establish a theme for the lesson?

With the selection of each pin, Ms. Sunny immediately knew how it would be used. She was able to develop a lesson plan, as she acknowledged that Pinterest was helpful after she reviewed Pin #10, the last pin stored in her “Keep” pinboard.

In addition, Ms. Sunny’s teaching pedagogy was reflected in her selection of pins, which were as follows:

- a) Encouraging student engagement. Power point presentations were directed at facilitating discussion with her students and were not necessarily a lecture tool.
- b) Promoting problem solving. Many pins were chosen because they featured artworks that Ms. Sunny believed would stimulate the students to think about the construction of an artwork.
- c) Relating the art to the students. Ms. Sunny was interested in maintaining student interest and being able to provide students with thing that they like.
- d) Finding subject matter that students would have an affinity for. Every pin that was selected for the “Keep” and “Release” pinboards were animals and in one special case, a “varmint” found in Pin #2.
- e) Considering colors were an important element. Rarely did a pin ever feature artworks that contained dark hues.

In the final chapter, I will expand on these findings. In a discussion of the pins that were selected and in Ms. Sunny’s interview, I will interpret the implications of using Pinterest to search for Mexican art lessons. Using the data discussed in this chapter, I will attempt to raise questions for further inquiry so that art educators and researchers can benefit from Ms. Sunny’s experience.

Chapter Five: Conclusions, Questions and Final Thoughts

ANSWERING THE CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research began by interviewing an experienced art educator in order to answer my first central research question: *What criteria does an elementary school art teacher apply when searching “Mexican art lessons” on Pinterest?* I conducted a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the interview text in order to study the criteria that Ms. Sunny applied to selecting pins for her lesson. By using Fairclough’s (1995) framework, I was able to break down her responses to interview questions in a three-phase method (description, interpretation and explanation) and found that ultimately, Ms. Sunny applied her knowledge and familiarity with Latin American art by identifying images that are both aesthetically pleasing and would be exciting and relevant for her students.

The pins that were selected by Ms. Sunny served as the artifacts that I later studied to answer my second research question: *What kinds of pins and pinboards are available to online users who search “Mexican art lessons” on Pinterest?* I originally began with this research question but I realized that by solely conducting a critical analysis of Pinterest, I risked the possibility of the data being skewed by my subjective interpretations. Therefore, I established validation by triangulating the collected data from this research question by interviewing an experienced art educator. By conducting a content analysis of selected notations of each pin and basing my findings off of Ms. Sunny’s interview, I discovered that many pins that are available to online users are geared toward experienced art educators who are both familiar with Mexican culture and are able to establish a teaching pedagogy, as this guides their selection criteria for pins.

THE VALUE OF PINTEREST

While I was skeptical of teachers referring to a social-media website that prides itself on discovering new ideas by browsing images that can be uploaded and shared by

anyone around the world, I have found that Pinterest is a great resource for educators, especially those who are visual learners.

Navigating the website to find inspiration for new ideas is incredibly simple with this website. The search bar can aid users who feel overwhelmed by the plethora of images on their home screens or can be helpful for others who know exactly what they are looking for. The guided search is helpful in this process as it breaks down keywords and filters through the database to match search items with other pins or pinboards that contain the same keywords.

If the lesson plan objective for an educator begins with a broad topic, browsing Pinterest presents users with pins and pinboards that contain images and hyperlinks, narrowing the focus of a topic. Or, as with what happened with Ms. Sunny, teaching objectives could change, altering the lesson plan to “evolve into something new” (M. Sunny, personal communication, March 8, 2016).

Based on Ms. Sunny’s experience, it is possible for an elementary school art teacher to create a lesson on Mexican art by using Pinterest. Determining which pins to use only took Ms. Sunny less than ten minutes.

There is value in using Pinterest, as this study proved. As a studio artist and art historian, I found that the lesson plan Ms. Sunny created was meaningful. She was able to construct a lesson that was based on Mexican culture and art to create an art project that did not feature stereotypical images, such as the many sugar skulls and Frida Kahlo-based artworks that I found when I first began this research. Additionally, the abundance of pins and pinboards that Pinterest generated did not overwhelm her nor did they deter her away

from the website. Based on her selections of Amate and Alebrije artworks, she discovered culturally rich material.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INQUIRY

During the process of this research, I found that there were several areas for potential inquiry that could be covered. Given the fact that Pinterest is a relatively new website, any new research that can better contribute to the understanding of its relationship with art education should be considered.

Researchers with diverse backgrounds would provide the field with a wide range of ideas on how art educators can search for multicultural art lessons on Pinterest. As discussed in Chapter Two, given the fact that multicultural education encourages diversity of perspectives in order to create equal opportunities for learning, research into this topic should be viewed in this same dimension. The potential for studying multiple teachers with different teaching experiences and cultural backgrounds would offer insight into the criteria that is applied between people of varying credentials, experience, genders and cultural backgrounds. A comparative analysis could also yield potential for collaboration on lesson plans between those educators.

As with diversity of educators, studying other cultures on Pinterest would be beneficial to the field. Studying Mexican art lessons on Pinterest was chosen because of my affinity toward my heritage and curiosity in discovering more about a minority group whose population continues to dominate the United States Census. Researching other cultures, such as Indian or African, would also aid in the diversity of multicultural art lessons.

The procedure that I developed with Ms. Sunny was just one method of studying this website. Due to the nature of this thesis, the procedure was limited to selecting pins on a search results page. Instead, it would be beneficial to study the browsing habits of art educators. These browsing habits could include how they navigate the website, such as if they click on outside links, advertisements, or other guided search results.

During this investigation, I also discovered that Pinterest misses the mark in terms of available information for teachers. While Pinterest is resource that provides users with an abundance of images, there was a lack of information for each Mexican art lesson pin and pinboard that I discovered. Another recommendation would be to explore how an inexperienced art educator who is unfamiliar with a culture makes use of the very limited information.

BENEFITS TO THE FIELD OF ART EDUCATION

As technology and education merge together to provide opportunities for students to learn in more innovative ways, the art education field should acknowledge this and consider the possibilities of the Internet as a source for relevant teaching materials. This study benefits the field by providing insight into art educators referring to popular websites as tools for teaching. In addition, this research benefits the field by exploring how a specific culture is being portrayed on Pinterest. For art educators who are in need of teaching materials that are based on Mexican culture and art, the pins that Ms. Sunny selected during this investigation provides examples of what an experienced art educator who is familiar with this culture has chosen.

FINAL THOUGHTS

While Pinterest may be used for pinning and saving ideas, it has proven to be a helpful tool for at least one art educator and has given me the opportunity to study this website further and understand ways in which I could use it in my teaching practice. Whether art educators search the database for an already proposed topic or are searching for inspiration, Pinterest provides opportunities for an educator's thirst for innovative art projects to be satisfied. Though some pins were attractive in imagery than others, Ms. Sunny and I were both able to experience what this website has to offer. For educators teaching Mexican art lessons, it is important to go beyond the sugar skull and discover culturally rich material that will connect with students.

Appendix A: Interviewee Background Information

Gender: F Ethnicity: Anglo

Years of Teaching Experience: 22 years of teaching experience

Educational Background: B.F.A from Sam Houston State

Do you have any experience using Pinterest? Yes.

If yes, are you an active account user? Somewhat.

Have you used Pinterest for lesson plan preparation? Yes.

If yes, was Pinterest helpful for lesson plan preparation? Yes

Comments: Inspiration. It leads to something else.

If no, explain:

Average class time duration: 50 min. Frequency: Every other day and week/
A & B week

Average class size 24; Largest: 28 Grade Level: K-5

Estimated class ethnicity:

African-American:

Asian:

Hispanic:

Other: Middle Eastern

White: Mostly

Have you ever prepared a lesson plan on Mexican art? Yes.

Tell me more about the lesson(s): Lesson on Latin American art for “Culture Nights” at school. This event takes place once a year. Lessons have included Maya hieroglyphs, Latin American folk tales, molas and Abrijo ceramics.

What teacher resources did you use? Museums, TAEA workshops, and digging for information.

Appendix B: Pre and Post Pin Interview Questions

The purpose of the interview was to determine if the objective(s) of a teacher's lesson plan on "Mexican art lessons" could be prepared using Pinterest.

Pre-Interview

Lesson Plan Objective(s):

1. To expose students to Latin American culture
2. To focus on an artist
3. To focus on a community
4. To focus on principles of art

Post-Interview

Q: After using Pinterest to develop a lesson plan, did your objective(s) change?

A: Yes.

Revised Objective(s): Expose students to Oaxacan culture

Q: Why did you change the objective of the lesson plan?

A: To narrow down objective.

Q: Were you able to develop a lesson plan by using Pinterest?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you like and dislike about using Pinterest as a resource for lesson plans on Mexican art?

A: Liked it because it helps narrow down focus. Is also helpful to view as visuals rather than texts. Not many dislikes.

Appendix C: Interview Questions for “Keep” Pins

1. What was it about this pin that made you select it for review?

Image:

Text:

2. Why did you choose to post this pin to the “Keep” pinboard?
3. How will you use this pin in your lesson plan?

Appendix D: Interview Questions for “Release” Pins

1. What was it about this pin that influenced your decision to select it for review?

Image:

Text:

2. Why did you choose to post this pin to the “Release” pinboard?

Appendix E: Interview Questions With Ms. Sunny

1. Do you have any experience using Pinterest? (1:38)
Yes.... I was very active when it first happened but now I may look at it sometimes. Sometimes, during vacation or the summer, I'll look at it more often, trying to think of new ideas but during the school year it's hard to because you get stuck...it just goes on and on.
2. Have you used Pinterest for lesson plan preparation? (2:18)
Yes, I have. Mainly for inspiration I guess. Sometimes when you go to Pinterest, it leads you to something else and so then that may be something I might use instead. It's just a nice resource. It is helpful. But, I don't count on it. But I don't use it every time for every lesson. I use it sometimes when I get stuck.
3. What is your average class time duration?
50 min
4. What is the frequency of your classes? (3:13)
Every other day, every other week. We have A week B week. And then on Fridays we do 25 min and we have to switch with P.E.. Has to have so many minutes in a week by state law.
5. What is your average class size? (3:52)
Probably about 24. Our third grade class is pretty huge so theres probably about 28 in that class.
6. What is the grade level?
K-5
7. What would you say the estimated class ethnicity is? (4:30)
Mostly white. We have a nice mixture of kids it's pretty diverse of middle eastern students and Asian students and Hispanic and African American. But I would say the neighborhood is predominantly Anglo.
8. Have you ever prepared a lesson plan on Mexican art? (5:06)
Yes. Latin-American
9. What was this lesson on? (5:18)
I've done several. I've done a Mayan hieroglyphs lesson. I've done folktales, Mexican...Latin American folktales. We've done molas, the abrijos ceramics sculptures. In the Fall we do a big cultural night and so I try to have at least one piece of Latin American up. So it kinda depends on. And during the year, some of the lessons lend itself that way.
 - How often are the culture nights? (6:30) Once a year. And because we are so Anglo, we try real hard to make sure the diversity is encouraged and make sure the kids are comfortable so in my class I try real hard not to just focus on European white man's art [laughs]. But sometimes it lends that way. But I try real hard not for it to.
10. What teacher sources did you use for these Latin American lesson plans? (7:05)

It's funny probably, not really the pinterest wasn't really my connection. It was mostly museum collections and just going to other workshops at TAEA and just digging through stuff myself because I didn't have that when I was in college and so we had mostly European focus and so I took some time to try and figure out some projects. I used to work at Birkman which is 98% Hispanic and so we had a big Cinco de Mayo festival and independence day festival and so I've made lessons for those kids to make sure they were connected because I wanted to really connect to them so I spent a lot of time doing that on my own before even Pinterest was around.

Explains procedure (8:57)

- What are your lesson plan objectives? (10:48)
To expose them [students] to the Latin American culture and maybe focus on one particular artist or maybe not even one artist but maybe a community like, Guadalajara for example and their art there. And focus on 'their livelihood is based on...' what they create. And I guess I would think about if it was for first grade for example, and I wanted to make sure it was color and balance, then looking at that art and trying to figure out how I can incorporate those two objectives in their art. And then I would just go online and look through and go to images. I would just type in Guadalajara art and I would look on images until I just found something that was kinda connected and then I would just take it from there.

Procedure begins (15:40)

- Explains her criteria by pointing out a pin related to Frida Kahlo... (21:20)
Some things to me are just too... they end up looking too much the same. I wouldn't want to do a project that ends up where there is no originality to them. Like, the Frida ones... I love Frida but I wouldn't do like all of them doing portraits of Frida. I would talk about Frida and have them do their own self portraits. Even if I connect to this.. I wouldn't do that with the students just because I wouldn't want them to all look like Frida. There's a bunch that I wouldn't like. Like, I'm not going to do the 'day of the dead' just because the parents... I tried it once and they didn't approve.

Goes back to Pinterest search results page for second time (24:00)

Pin reviews begin (28:33)

Because it is the actual true piece of art from the Oaxacan area of Mexico. (So it was the image?) It was the image, yes. (Okay, how would you know that it was a true Oaxacan...) (28:58)

I guess I don't really know for sure but just looking at it looks like a good example of Oaxacan so I guess I don't really know if it's the real thing but it looks like a good image if I was going to show the kids their art.

Why did you choose it for the keep board?

Just because the colors are bright and then it was 3dimensional as a form and so the kids could connect to it because it looks a little bit like a varmant and they like varmants.

How will you use this pin in your lesson plan?

So if I was doing a powerpoint I would use that as an example of the sculpture we will be creating after we do a drawing. But we would also have to discuss that this one, I don't know if its true or not, but the tru ones are made out of word so ours will be made out of clay so we'll have to consider the building of the piece and if youre going to do a long tail its not going to be able to stick up like that because it wouldn't be very supportive but this is a good example.

(Procedure starts over 33:25)

(Timing also restarts)

Second pin review (for "keep" pinboard) begins (39:52)

So on a project I would be thinking of, I would show "amate"... is that how you say it? The bark painting and then we'll do that first and then we will go from there and do an actual clay sculpture piece. So this was a good example I thought because of the colors and the use of different types of animals and not necessarily a real animal color so they can be a little more creative in their colors and their designs. Talk about the designs on here, not just the animals but maybe the floral designs and the other details.

(So, why did you choose to post this pin in your keep board?) Example.

(So for your lesson plan, how would you specifically use it?)

I would use it in my powerpoint as an example of amate bark paintings and just a visual for us to discuss and kids will do a discussion like what they saw, what they see in it, and why they like it or not like it and the colors it was used.

I thought it was pretty unique. I would like the kids to be a little more original in their sculptures so it was a good visual for taking an idea from. So this would be toward the end because it would be a good example to go further with it...it doesn't have to be realistic it can be something from their imagination and a combination. And also has really good designs on it, taken from amate bark paintings.

(43:25)

It's a good visual again from the bark paintings. I chose it because of the colors and the composition so the kids will see it doesn't have to be symmetrical like the other one was,

it was very symmetrical, where as this one is not symmetrical, not smack dap down the middle.

(44:01)

Well the information, it looks like its truly from Oaxacan... it says it's a Oaxacan wood carved frog so I would hopefully think it's the real deal so it would be nice for the kids to see and we could discuss the process they go through to create the wooden and the size. Example on the powerpoint again. But I would also use it as an example what8 the wood versus clay, how they would have to balance it out and figure out how they would balance this so it wouldn't tumble over.

(45: 44)

Another example of the bark. I like to give the kids several things to see, not just one or two, so just an example of the artist focus on one animal on this one instead of the grouping, and the colors they use.

(46:42)

I like the designs that the artist put on the actual piece like the lines and shape designs so I would, when the kids do this sculpture piece they would have to include that on theirs too. So they have to problem solve that.

Another powerpoint.

(47:25)

This one I wasn't sure if it was the real deal, it says its from Mexico Art Organization, but I didn't know if it was or just a student piece so if it was the student piece, I would have thought it would have been a good example of a students work but I might not even use it if it wasn't. Because I thought I probably had enough examples.

Another good example of an authentic Oaxacan piece. (because of the image or text?)

I'm sure it was the image first and then after reading it. I wouldn't just pop it in there [powerpoint] without reading the text.

Probably the colors and the sculpture itself. It would be a good example for the kids to see

(49:08)

Probably saw the bright colors and also the composition. And then probably after making the powerpoint, then I might not focus.. like we might discuss one of these more intensely and then not discuss the other ones as much. So maybe focus on one particular one in the powerpoint and just show some other examples and just talk about the balance and the composition of them. (So would this pin be the one particular one?) I don't know, maybe more like one of the first ones.

(50:18)

This one looked like student work to me so I thought this might be a nice one to put in. (from the image or text?) From the image, for sure.

Probably just discuss with the kids using the colors and what colors they were gonna use in their bark painting piece first and then, are they gonna change their colors when they get to the clay piece or are they gonna be the same? I'm gonna have to write this lesson plan down its getting better and better! It kinda evolves. So on Pinterest you kinda just grab stuff and throw it in a folder. Like, okay I gotta do a piece on Mexican art so I just go look at my Mexican art file on Pinterest. Because I have one, I think its labeled like, 'culture', so then I would look there and look for the things that I saved and then maybe click one and it'll lead me to another one. Then I would have to get the map on my Pinterest, you know the map in the powerpoint where the places really are in Mexico. I wouldn't just use this. I would add that too. Or maybe use the globe or the world map but usually the screens down so I usually just put a map in the powerpoint because younger kids, cus they think kids think Round Rock is Texas and Austin is Alaska.. they don't know. (So you would combine other materials as well?) Yeah. And probably go look at our library too and see if there's any literature books on maybe the story that's illustrates or done in this style. (Do you normally go to the library to research?) Yeah, we don't actually have to go. I can go online and look and see. (So you pretty much do your own outside research then?) I guess so. If I have never figured it out yet, before you know? Like if its something new. And then sometimes things you know after so many years you think, is that really true or did I just make that up? So then I have to go back and check to make sure that it's true [laughs]. Because after you say something over and over and you think, okay is that really what I said is true and then I have to go back and check. You hope what you're saying is true. Students aren't gonna say or have never said, Ms. Arnold, no. That's not true.

(Shows all of the selected pins in the "keep" pinboard) Is there anything else you'd like to say? (54:37)

No, but like this one (points to pin #8) I bet I won't end up using it. Because after comparing it to the other ones, it's not very strong. Because I do like the dots that the artist used on the detail. I would have to play with these.

Second pin review for "release" pinboard begins (55:10)

So when I saw it I though, oh maybe I'm gonna use it, but then after looking at it, ugh! I don't like the visual of it. So the visual wouldn't help me at all for my powerpoint. Because it's a bunch of papers on a bulletin board and its not very direct. And plus it looks like they were doing trees and I Was doing animals so that's why. (So it was poorly photographed?) I guess so. For my purpose. I mean if you were looking for a bunch of examples. So its not even really straight for the powerpoint.

I first looked at it and I thought, oh its another good example of the tree bark pieces but then after looking I think, well then no. Once again, the visual is not very good for

showing the kids. And its not a good example for student work. I would want them to be pushed a little bit harder. And they look a little too much step by step on the birds. So these two birds, they probably did a little step by step. And I don't do that. Ill do step-by-step if im teaching the kids how to do something but we don't use it for our projects. We'll do step-by-step in our sketchbook maybe, like if they were doing if it was the first time we were drawing birds or something. We might do some step by step and talk about the shapes and how birds are certain shapes and how they shapes put together create a bird but we wouldn't use that particular drawing for a project. IT would be like a little mini lesson I guess in their sketchbook just to get them more comfortable. I just don't want them all end up looking the same. That's really huge.

(58:22)

So with Pinterest, I know there are some art teachers that use Pinterest but they all look exactly the same. So I don't use Pinterest that way. It's more like a visuals and finding the real dal. Sometimes looking through stuff reminds me of other things and I connect it to other things. But I really don't like the pieces that look all the same. Its not very, doesn't have the students personality in it. Plus, I would think that the students would compare each other. I don't like that either. Like if they would look at each other and say, oh that's not as perfect as mine, it doesn't look like Ms. Arnold's.

(So how do you do that specifically with the lessons, if you're trying to get students to make their own individual artwork? (59:20)

Like, if I had all of that powerpoint put together, we would probably look at it and discuss...okay early on we have a big discussion about how we are all individual and that when you look at your art, its not going to look like anyone else's so that's like, a big talk of the beginning of the year. And then of course I revisit it a lot. And the younger kids are really good about this just drawing and doing what they wanna do but the older they get, they're harder on themselves. And so we have to talk about it more often. And then we do gallery walks in class when they're working and then we'll stop and we'll walk around and look at everyone's art and then I say you can be inspired. And you might say, oh Im doing a rooster also but my roosters gonna look like this and your rooster looks like that and that's okay. Not everyones gonna be the same.

1:00:47

So, like on a project like this, I guess like that last little piece, that last picture, the silly little sculpture of a bird or something. That'd be a really good example to *me* because this silly one here, because its really so unique and different from anything else. But sometimes, you have those. It's real bad with the girls. Or, I have two boys that do it too. They sit beside each other and they always wanna do the same thing. Like they talk about it. And they always wanna do it together. Like they wanna be the same. But they're just being good friends and that's just how they are. Sometimes they wanna tape it together because they just wanna do it together.

So do you usually start out with a big idea then? (1:01:48)

A big idea and a powerpoint. And its either connected to the, an artist or several artists, or it might be connected to a culture or a country. Because if its not, it doesn't seem like the project is complete... for me. Its needs to be more than just, okay we're all gonna draw horses today.

(1:02:37)

One of my pet-peeves though, Like when a teacher uses Pinterest and they do it step by step then they all look the same. I guess its just my personality. It kinda grosses me out. But they're all the same, and they all look really great.

When you look at Pinterst, do you consider the texts at all? (1:02:57)

After. I look at it through really facst. And then if I find one I like then I read the text and see more information.

So, are you initially judging by the image?

Yes, for sure.

Do you consider the texts, like for the one you really like (pulls up pin #___) Do you considere,... Would you consider other people's comments?

Not really. Not particularly.

(Goes back to "Mexican art lessons" search results page... showing the categories under the search bar)

Do you consider these categories up top here? I have, yeah.

Are they helpful to you?

Yeah, if Im looking for something kinda particular like, "Mexican art lessons" and I don't wanna do day of the dead, maybe Ill think, well its really gonna be about Mexico. Yeah, I would. It's a new thing? Isnt it?

Do you feel like your objectives have changed based on what you saw? (1:06:29)

I guess that was pretty broad, so this helped me narrow it down.

So, do you think you, what objective do you think you did you narrow it down to?

I was probably gonna be focusing on a sculpture. Two pieces. I was gonna have the kids be exposed to two areas of Mexico, the Oaxacans area and the amates, and so then after exposing them to that, then I would like, make that in to two projects. One would be the bark painting and the other would be the sculpture of the abrija sculptures..how do you say it? The Oaxacan animals but theres a good word, whats the word?.... (looks through pins) So that's the other thing, it helps me with my vocabulary it helps me figure it out. So theres abrija? And then sometimes it helps me narrow it down because then I get too much going in my head about it and then it helps me pull it in tighter. Since we only see them every other week every other day of that week, you have to cover a lot. You cant

just say we're gonna work on one little like "TEAK you have to combine a bunch on one project

1:08:59

So with what you selected for your keep pinboard, were you able to develop a lesson?
Yeah, for sure.

What did you like and dislike about using Pinterest as a resource?

I don't really have any dislikes, I guess the only thing I disliked, I mean I disliked some of the images I saw but that doesn't mean I wasn't gonna use them. I liked it because I was able to visually, quickly start remembering stuff I had already learned a long time ago and start re-focus and narrow my focus down too. I'm a visual learner for sure so like having a visual is so much easier than going through a book and page and page and page of written text so. And I hope that people keep on pinning stuff and posting because sometimes you see the same thing over and over. Like, (points to pin) I've seen this a billion times. Sometimes you see the same images over and over and over and you think, okay surely there's something else out there so I hope it does keep growing. I just hope it doesn't get people too cookie-cutter. It's just another resource, just like looking through "Arts Activities" or "School Arts" magazine... it's just another resource to use.

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Vita

Stephanie Sandoval was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. She attended Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and graduated in 2010. Upon graduation, she attended The University of Texas at San Antonio studying Fine Arts until transferring to the University of Texas at Austin. She graduated from UT Austin in May 2014 with a B.A. in Art. Following graduation, she attended UT Austin, pursuing an M.A. in Art Education, graduating in May 2016. Upon completing this thesis, Stephanie returned to Dallas to begin a career in studio art and public school teaching in visual arts.

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This thesis was typed by the author.